

BASF 6.9.1.2



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Subject: Comment 1.10



MaryKay et al

Here's a response for the NWA comment. It has been vetted by Adrienne. -BC



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Comment

When one reviews the discharge standards to be applied to the CTP, it is difficult to avoid the impression that EPA is applying a different, and far less rigorous, standard to itself than it has applied to the NPDES permits proposed for mines in the vicinity of the CTP. At the very least it again brings into question the technical validity of EPA's TMDL program as well as the process used to develop TMDLs for a given watershed.

It is NWMA's view that the whole TMDL effort, including the dubious discharge limits it produces, is an overly academic exercise that favors doctrine over reality. If this were not the case, why should the CTP be allowed to release over nine times the mass of cadmium, almost 24 times the mass of lead, and 10 times the mass of zinc than a mine like the Lucky Friday when similar flows are involved? The Association fully appreciates there are differences between the two facilities, yet must still question what is going on.

Thus, we urge EPA to impose exactly the same effluent limitations on its proposed operation of the CTP as it has included in the draft NPDES permits for Silver Valley mines. This would go a long way to restoring the credibility of the EPA, and also demonstrate conclusively that what it is asking industry to do is technologically achievable and cost-effective. In addition, there are the obvious Basin-wide benefits of further reducing contaminants of concern that would be provided by meeting the more rigorous standards, as well as furthering the goal of restoring the highly impaired fishery of the waters that will receive CTP effluent.

Response

The TMDL for the Coeur d'Alene River basin was finalized by the State of Idaho and EPA in August 2000 after the agencies received and responded to extensive public input. Thus, the TMDL itself is not the subject of this public comment period on proposed CERCLA actions at the Bunker Hill CTP. EPA directs the commenter to the administrative record for the TMDL (particularly the Technical Support Document and Response to Comments), which sets forth the basis for the wasteload allocations for the sources discussed in this comment.

As indicated in the Technical Support Document, a number of basin characteristics affect the loading capacity and wasteload allocations for individual sources. These parameters include: river flow, river hardness, natural background concentrations, total/dissolved metals translators, and flowrates of discrete sources. The differences in wasteload allocations are due to the variation in these parameters between the target site locations.

The wasteload allocations for the Bunker Hill CTP were calculated using the same calculation method that was used for the other discrete point sources. Therefore, the suggestion that EPA is applying a different standard to itself than to other sources is erroneous.